



Family Asset Building Department Small Cities IDA Program

A success story

Mery Rivas' journey to homeownership

Mery Rivas was born in the Dominican Republic. She came to America a teacher by profession and a single mother of three teenage boys. Mery has struggled economically throughout her life, and she came to the United States hoping to find a better life for her family. She first came to the U.S. to stay temporarily with her two elderly parents and care for them. This was difficult with too many people living in a small apartment, but she could not afford anything else.

Mery was employed part-time by a local organization at the time she joined the IDA program in January 2005. As a member of LCW, she learned about the variety of programs offered by the organization. As a result, Mery became involved in other programs within the organization: she became a member of the Family Asset Building Committee (a resident committee guiding program development) and a graduate of the PODER Leadership Institute.

Mery faced many barriers during the program. She got sick and she lost her job, her kids were feeling like outsiders in the school system and some family issues surfaced. But Mery never gave up; she found a new job as a teacher's aide at one of the most prestigious schools in the City and was able to move out of her parent's apartment. She worked hard to fix and maintain her credit.

Mery successfully completed the financial literacy education and attended all the peer support groups; she graduated from the IDA Program in January 2007, saved \$1,250.00 and got \$3,600.00 in match. Mary qualified for a great mortgage loan with a reputable lender and purchased her first home in June 2007.

Now Mery and her family have a great sense of security and are happier than ever. She is still working at the school, using the new financial skills she learned in the IDA program, and remains very active in the community.